Feb. 19, 1992

Dear Mr. Weisburg:

I remember you very well and our conversations of many years ago. I have been tardy in answering your letter, not because I didn't welcome it, but because I retired from The Times on Dec. 31, consequently had much mail and paperwork to attend to, and got away as soon as I could on a short trip to Mexico. Oliver Stone, not content with denouncing me in The Times and every forum he can find, followed me there (not, I suppose, on purpose) and told Mexico City fans that JFK had been killed in a "fascist coup." He did not explain, of course, why Earl Warren took part in a fascist coup, or why the attorney general at the time never uncovered or remarked upon, then or later, this aspect of his brother's death.

I had my say about the Stone film in The Times, and I'm glad you found it worthwhile. But it's a losing fight. Just today I heard Stone had been nominated for an Academy Award; he'll probably get it. His film is exciting and wellmade -- even if dishonest in its concept, deceitful in its unfolding, and fraudulent in its hero. That Stone based it on Jim Garrison's fantasies is in itself proof of its utter lack of credibility, and of Stone's abysmal failure to check up on anything.

My impression, however, is that the film has won widespread public acceptance, and that young people in particular accept it as fact, despite its wild incongruities. The general climate of distrust of government contributes to this acceptance, and in turn is heightened by it. That film seems to me the broadest act of "artistic" irresponsibility of my time.

I know George Lardner as a reliable reporter, and none of your account of your dealings with Oliver Stone surprised me. I appreciate your good wishes, and your offer of help if I plan to take this matter further -- but I don't, as I think it's fruitless to try to counter the impact of a Hollywood film with such drama, however manufactured. I said to an intelligent and sophisticated lady in Mexico City that Garrison was a fraud; to which, thinking of Kevin Costner, she replied: "Oh, but he's so cute!"

Sincerely,

Tom Wicker